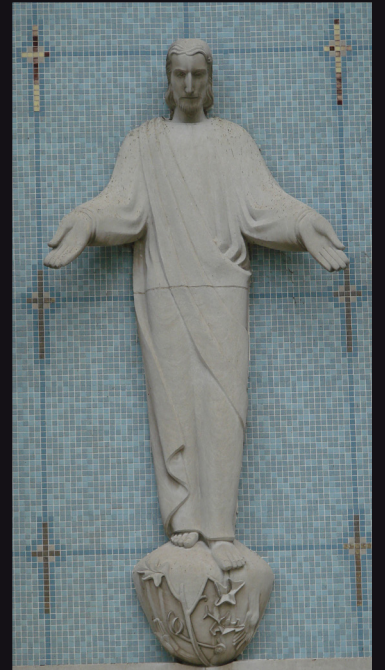


51 ST
ALTON AREA
LANDMARKS ASSOCIATION

**HOME AND
BUILDING TOUR**
FEATURING
**SEVEN HISTORIC
CHURCH BUILDINGS**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7
2023
10AM-3PM**
SHUTTLE SERVICE AVAILABLE



1

SAINTS PETER AND PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH

**717 STATE STREET
FR. JEFF HOLTMAN OFS**



Saints Peter & Paul Catholic Church is in the Christian Hill Historic District.

Saints Peter & Paul's Catholic Church is an example of the early Victorian Gothic Revival, characterized by pointed arches, relatively small windows, and buttresses on the exterior. It was begun in 1855 and completed in 1857 at a cost of nearly \$35,000. The church was constructed of native limestone quarried behind the church along Belle Street, at the foot of 9th Street.

The church was designed by St. Louis architect Thomas Walsh, though there was once a parish rumor it was designed by the great architect A.W.N. Pugin. When construction began, it was a parish church, but in 1857, the episcopal see was moved from Quincy to Alton. The Diocese of Alton at the time comprised the entire southern half of Illinois, and Saints Peter & Paul was made the cathedral. The cathedral was solemnly consecrated on May 15, 1859, by Archbishop Kenrick of St. Louis. The interior of the church has been often redecorated, most recently about 2005. The marble furnishings were assembled in 1983 from the "bones" of the high altar, which had been built in 1902 by T.G. Shrader & Sons, of St. Louis. The altar, which was made of wood, was used in a basement chapel of St. Mary's, Alton, for many years before being stored in a barn which burned down. The stations of the cross were installed in 1923. The engravings in the hallway leading to the rectory show the interior and exterior of the church as it looked while Fr. Zweisler was rector of the Cathedral (1876-88), probably before he redecorated the church in 1886.

The church itself has survived two fires. The first fire broke out on a Sunday morning in January of 1902. The fire was confined to the apse, but Bishop Ryan narrowly missed being hit by debris when he went in to take the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle. The second fire was caused by a lightning strike in 1949, which destroyed the main tower and caused other damage to the interior of the church. The space-age steeples and the cross at the top of the roof date to this time. The original steeples were built in 1866, though the first clock was not installed until 1931. There are three bells in the tower, given at various times between 1862 and 1871.

Rt. Rev. Henry Damien Juncker, a native of Lorraine and a priest of Cincinnati, was appointed the first Bishop of Alton, serving from 1857 to 1868. Rt. Rev. Peter Joseph Baltes, a Bavarian by birth, was the second Bishop of Alton from 1870 to 1886. After the death of Bishop Baltes, the diocese was divided, and the southern section became the Diocese of Belleville. Rt. Rev. James Ryan, an Irishman, served as bishop from 1888 to 1923, and at his death, the see was moved from Alton to Springfield.

Bishop Juncker and Bishop Baltes are buried in the crypt beneath the church. The crypt is accessible only from the outside of the church. To find it, go around to the back of the church and choose the left-hand door at ground level. Bishop Ryan is buried in the priests' plot at St. Patrick's cemetery under the tall marker to the left of the crucifix. The tile decorations in the crypt were completed in 1962.

The crypt is included in the tour, but it is not wheelchair-accessible. A demonstration of the church organ will take place at 3:00 pm.

2

**ST. PAUL'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH**
10 EAST THIRD STREET
BUILT: 1856



St. Paul's Episcopal Church is in the Middletown Historic District.

This beautiful stone church located at the corner of Market and Third Streets has been the site of a church since 1834. The original building was constructed in 1834 by Captain Benjamin Godfrey, and was offered for use by various organized religious groups. In February 1836 Alton Episcopalians elected their first vestry. St. Paul's Episcopalian Parish purchased the building from Captain Godfrey in 1845 for the sum of \$1,800.

The present church was built in 1856, at a cost of \$13,000. It is believed that much of the stone from the original church was re-used in the present building, as were some of the original foundation walls. In June of 1860 a tornado struck its devastating effect, resulting in the loss of the church tower and extensive damages to the roof. The cost of estimated damages was over \$5,000, a large sum of money in 1860.

The parish house, which currently houses office space, was added in 1917. The educational building was completed in 1960. The old rectory building was razed and in its place a garden was created. Standing appropriately among the trees is a sculpture depicting St. Francis of Assisi created by the artist, Hillis Arnold. Mr. Arnold also crafted the sculpture of St. Paul seen inside the church. Some of the stained glass windows were designed by the renowned Emil Frei and Associates of St. Louis.

The church underwent a total renovation in 1976. At this time the building received a new roof, new heating and lighting systems, carpeting and new basement storage areas. Several original features have been retained, among them the hardware on the church's front door and the tile floor which was carefully saved and relaid. The church purchased a new organ in 1991 made by the Robert Dial Organ Builders of Springfield, Illinois. The organ is notable in that it has 2,057 pipes playable over 36 ranks and 4 divisions.

In June 2020, a major fire starting in the first floor of the addition caused extensive destruction. Billowing black smoke damaged the interior of the church and everything had to be cleaned and repainted.

This year St. Paul's celebrates 187 years. Throughout its long history, St. Paul's has had 27 rectors who have served the parish through both prosperous and difficult times. The parish has withstood war, economic hardship and, on occasion, even absence of clergy. Through it all, the parish has remained steadfast, united, and today continues to flourish. The Reverend Christopher Ashmore is the interim Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal today.

A presentation about the church organ plus light refreshments in the garden will take place from 10 am to 3 pm.

3

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF ALTON

110 EAST THIRD STREET

PASTOR:

REV. DR. CLAUDIA HALL

BUILT: 1905



The First Unitarian Church of Alton is in the Middletown Historic District.

In 1831, Dr. William Samuel Emerson (2nd cousin of Ralph Waldo Emerson) arrived in Alton from Kennebunk, Maine with his wife Olive and young son, Lincoln. Dr. Emerson was Alton's first physician and he brought with him his Unitarian religion. Within a year or so Sunday services were being held in Dr. Emerson's office. In 1836 the small congregation called its first minister. However, following the murder of abolitionist Elijah P. Lovejoy in 1837, the upheaval and violence in the city caused the minister to leave and the congregation was without a minister and met in homes and rented halls until Rev. William d'Arcy Haley was called to the First Unitarian Society congregation in October 1853. He asked that property on which to build a church be found as soon as possible.

In February 1854 a devastating fire destroyed most of St. Matthew's Catholic Church, located at 3rd and Alby Streets. A member of the Unitarian Society purchased the property for \$3,000 a few months later and transferred the deed to the Unitarians. Construction was begun and the Unitarian Church dedicated in 1855.

Between 1858 and 1866 The Advanced School, the first public co-ed high school in Alton, met in the lower level of the church building. The City paid rent to the church for the use of the facility for the high school.

In 1903 the Unitarian congregation decided to build a new sanctuary on the same site and demolished the original church building. The new church sanctuary was built and dedicated in October 1905.

Some of the stones from the 1855 church, as well as part of the foundation from the Catholic church were used.

In the sanctuary several features stand out. The chandelier was from France and was part of the Catholic church but hadn't been damaged by the fire. The ceiling is in the Arts and Crafts style and was added in 1917. The windows are not technically stained glass, but art glass. The glass has a wavy, pebbly texture and colors from the use of different minerals – copper, selenium, sodium, iron – just to name a few.

The carved walnut chairs on the pulpit platform are the oldest wooden pieces in the church. Each of the botanical elements has symbolic meaning: laurel for achievement, olive for peace, ivy for friendship, pineapple for hospitality.

The room beyond the sanctuary is called the Kate Wuerker Room and is used for fellowship and large church gatherings. Originally it was divided and partitioned numerous ways for classrooms, small meeting rooms, etc. Near where the buffet table is today is where the Rev. Phillip Mercer hung himself in November 1934. His suicide has given rise to the talk that the church is "haunted" and ghost tours come through regularly. To the left of the fireplace is a "secret staircase" now covered by flooring leading down to the basement. The kitchen and coffee area were remodeled in 2013.

The extension of the building past the Wuerker Room is an addition made in the late 1960s for classrooms and offices.

4

THE BRIDGE CHURCH

504 EAST 12TH STREET

RECTOR: STEVEN HELFRICH

BUILT: 1961



The Bridge Church is in the Middletown Historic District.

The building housing The Bridge had its beginnings as the First Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Alton in 1855. It is the third building on the site.

The first church building was built in 1855 to the east of the current sanctuary, where the classrooms now stand. It was 33 feet by 65 feet, with two rooms in the basement where the first services were held in January, 1856. In June of that year, the auditorium above was completed and dedicated.

In 1900, the structure was substantially remodeled to support rapid growth in attendance and membership. In 1941, the church purchased a lot from the adjoining Bowman property on 13th Street, and in 1946 it obtained the remaining portion of the estate, including the Bowman Mansion for use as a manse. On February 15, 1959, the church building caught fire and was destroyed. Fortunately, the Wicks tubular pipe organ, built for the church in 1911, had been temporarily removed and escaped the blaze. The organ would later be installed in the new church.

After the fire, the church held school and worship services in the Y.M.C.A. from 1959 to 1961, while the land was cleared and the present church built. The cornerstone was laid October 9, 1960, and the first service was held in the new building on Pentecost Sunday, May 21, 1961. The church was designed by Rex Becker, who designed three other churches in Alton. The main floor seats 286 and the balcony an additional 70. The stained glass windows represent:

- Chancel: The Trinity
- Nave (West): Creation, Fall of Man, Messianic Promise, Nativity, Passion and Death, Resurrection
- Nave (East): Baptism, the World, Communion, Prayer, Praise, Faith, Hope, Charity
- Narthex: Call to Worship, the Church

The bell tower holds the bell from the original church. The internationally recognized sculptor Hillis Arnold made the statue of Jesus above the front doors. The remainder of the building includes a parlor, memorial garden courtyard, classrooms, offices, kitchen, and a fellowship hall.

The building was gifted to The Bridge, a small church at the time, in 2013. Its first worship service in the building was on Easter Sunday, March 31, 2013, and it has worshipped there every Sunday since.

5

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH

320 EAST SEVENTH STREET

PASTOR: REV. KELVIN ELLISON

BUILT: 1902



Union Baptist Church
is in the Middletown Historic District.

Union Baptist Church celebrated 185 years in 2022.

The history of Union Baptist Church parallels much with the history of the city of Alton. The church was organized in 1837, the same year that Alton became incorporated as a city in the state of Illinois. The location of this river-town between the North and the South would also be a crossroad with blacks and whites.

By 1837, former slaves, freed or not, fled the South and made their way north, settling in Alton. The Underground Railroad was effective in helping those who were escaping from oppressive conditions. Many blacks, craftsmen and/or domestic workers had obtained their freedom before the civil war. The abolitionist atmosphere of Alton, led by Reverend Elijah P. Lovejoy, must have been a welcome relief from plantation life.

The Church was originally known as African Baptist Church and Friends of Humanity. The first pastor was Rev. John Livingstone aided by members from the white First Baptist Church in Alton. Rev. Livingstone founded the Wood River Baptist Association in 1839.

After meeting in homes for years, land owned by Daniel Ryrie at the north corner of 7th and George Streets was

donated to the church where the first structure was built. Later a two story church was built to accommodate worship services upstairs and the first Black school on the lower level. Shurtleff College (present day SIU Dental School) supplied the teachers. Rev. James Henry McGee was pastor of Union and the first Black teacher hired by the Alton School Board.

In 1876 a lack of finances forced a sale of the property. The present church was reestablished in 1902. Mr. Edmund Beall, who was a Mayor of Alton and State Senator, gave the land to the church. The site had to be filled in to build on. Materials from the old church were used as the foundation for the new church. The improvements have been made over the years.

The 186-year-old church has received long standing recognition for its role in the struggle for Freedom, Equality, Voting Rights, School Integration, Equal Employment, etc. Union is a tapestry of history woven with blacks and whites working together for progress in the Alton community. Rev. John Oliver served 40 years as pastor (1958-1998).

Rev. Kelvin Ellison serves as current pastor (1999-now). Services begin at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings. All are welcome to attend.

6

**MORNING STAR
MISSIONARY
BAPTIST CHURCH**

6TH AND MARKET STREETS

PASTOR:

**REV. DARRELL J.
MCCRADY, SR.**

BUILT: 1904



Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church is part of the Middletown Historical District.

On November 12, 2006 Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church took ownership of the edifice at 1 East Sixth Street. On November 26, 2006, churches throughout the city of Alton joined together to give thanks and dedicated this house to God. The march-in date was declared by proclamation to be Morning Star Day. At the time Morning Star MBC took ownership of this building, the presiding Pastor was Rev. David Goins, who is now the Mayor to the City of Alton, IL. At the end of 2021, he stepped down to pursue his career in politics and Rev. Darrell J. McCrady, Sr. was elected and installed as Pastor in April of 2022 and remains in this position to this date. Morning Star MBC has kept up with the integrity of the building. The stained glass windows are still a major attraction for this church.

Members who attended a church held in this building as children come to visit when they return to Alton to visit family or as they pass through, just to get a look at the windows.

Architects Turnbull & Jones of Elgin, Illinois designed the church, and the general contractor was A. Lunderstrum of Joliet. The church bell was cast by David Caughlin in 1858.

In 1922 a fire destroyed most of the sanctuary and damaged the organ. It was quickly rebuilt, and today's sanctuary is like the original. Curved padded pews draw the eye to the altar, and a remarkably beautiful large "Resurrection" window faces Market Street.

7

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WEST FOURTH AND ALBY STREETS

BUILT: CIRCA 1897



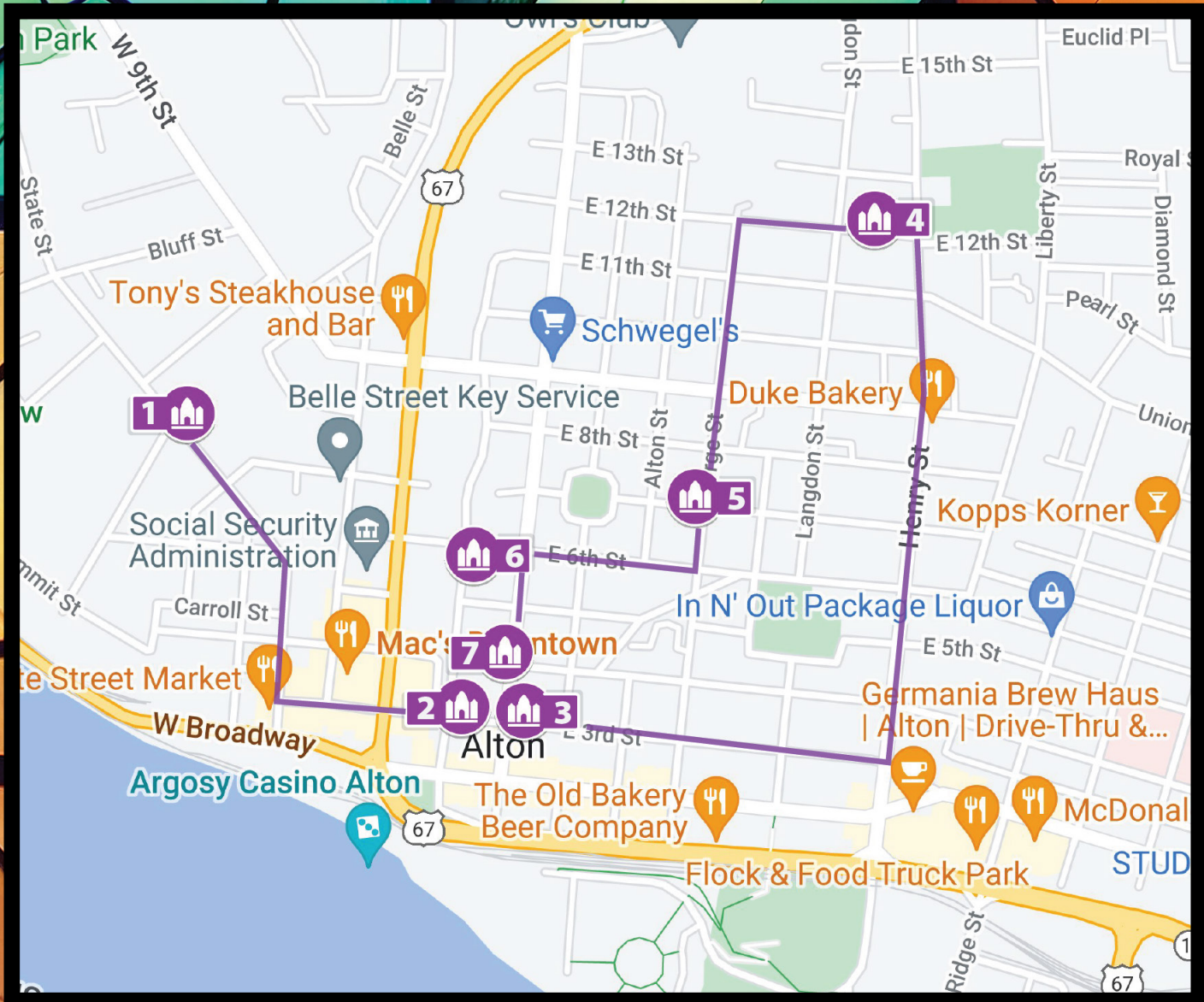
First Presbyterian Church
is in the Middletown Historic District.

The first Presbyterian Church, founded in June of 1831, has maintained a house of worship and provided a ministry to the people of Alton at the corner of Fourth and Alby Streets since December of 1897. The present building is the third edifice to be called “home” to this congregation of Scots. The corner stone of the structure was laid on July 5, 1897. Under the direction of renowned architect, Theodore Link, the Victorian-Gothic structure was erected of local limestone ashlar with cut limestone trim from Bedford, Indiana.

The sanctuary and chancel portions of the building were drastically altered in 1963, closely following “enlargement plans” suggested and sketched by Link. Portions of the stone exterior were rebuilt following the devastating fire of July 8, 1988, which destroyed 75% of the original structure and all of its interior contents. The famed “hammer-beams” and massive wood roof structure reemerged during reconstruction. Pillar corbels were recast from pieces of the original iron. Wood carvings, molding, and “Cathedral” blown/hand-rolled stain glass were installed shortly before the rededication service in December 1990.

The sanctuary is designed to create a sense of majesty in worship. The stained glass depicts images of the Old and New Testaments, the sacraments, and the Psalms. The Ten Commandments, for instance, have the ten Hebrew words on them. The Incarnation window is a striking conception of a portal into this world. The Psalm windows surround the choir area as a meditative space, but also one where the artist had some amusement in depicting sound. The carved wood Celtic cross picks up some of the stained glass images. The wood ceiling goes back to Celtic imagination of the church as a ship of salvation.

The bell in the church was given by Hannah (Robbins) Gilman, mother of Winthrop, to Benjamin Godfrey’s Church (NE 3rd and Market) in 1834. The trustees of Monticello sold the building to the Episcopal Church in 1845 or 1846 but not before the bell was mysteriously removed late one night. The bell resurfaced in the new First Presbyterian Church (SE Broadway and Market) in 1846. It was relocated to the 4th and Alby location in 1897.



SCAN TO OPEN MAP
ON PHONE

Alton Area Landmarks Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 232
Alton, IL 62002

altonlandmarks.org

ALTON AREA LANDMARKS ASSOCIATION

BOX 232, ALTON, IL 62002

WWW.ALTONLANDMARKS.ORG

The AALA was founded in 1970 during an effort to save the old GM&O railroad station downtown from demolition. Support was widespread, but the building was razed for the William L. Beatty Federal Building on Belle Street.

In order to promote the architectural heritage of the greater Alton area, the Historic House Tour was started in 1971. The AALA is a not-for-profit corporation. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.

AALA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jonathan Bland

Joyce Boswell

Ann Davidson

Dr. John Lindsay

James Paris

Jane Rhetta

Terry Sharp

Eric Shultis

Greg Stranquist

THANKS TO

Cory M. Jobe-President and CEO of Great Rivers and Routes of Southwest Illinois

Mike Adams-graphic designer

Caleb Lewis-Alton Odyssey Tours

Michael Haynes-Director of Alton Parks and Recreation